

ANNUAL REPORT

TO

THE MEMBERS OF SHORT HEATH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BY

JOHN T. HARTILL,

L.R.C.P.L., M.R.C.S., Eng., J.P.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

January 24th, 1903.



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Annual Report (1902) by John Y. Hartill
M.O.H. to Short-Heath District Council,
copy of which was sent to you and the
Editor of the B.M.J. last Monday.

Correction

For the word low substitute high on page
2, fourth line from bottom, so that the
part of a sentence may read

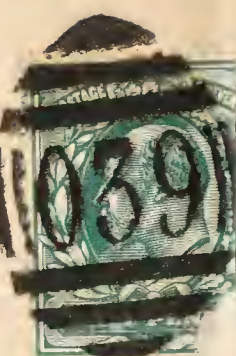
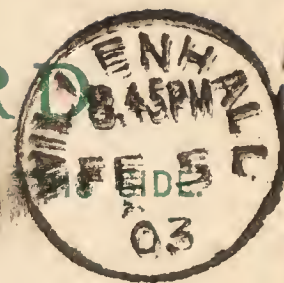
"that the birth rate was remarkably
high." instead of low, as printed

Feb 5, 1903

J. Y. H.

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429 Strand

London W. C.

Medical Officer's Annual Report, 1902.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

In this my 32nd Annual Report, I am glad to be able to say that except in the month of November, sickness was considerably under the average throughout the year.

The physical features and general character of the District remain much as they were ; but there are more Coal Miners and fewer Locksmiths, Iron Workers and persons occupied on the land resident within the District. The Miners who work for the most part at Essington, within Cannock Rural District have been prosperous ; whilst the Lock industries were seriously affected by a prolonged strike in the adjacent Township of Willenhall. The supply of food was good, plentiful and cheap.

The Birth and Death Rates, estimated on a population of 3585 at Midsummer, were respectively 45·1 and 12·8 per thousand per year, as compared with an average of 40·9 and 16·9 in the ten preceding years. The Death Rate from the seven principal Zymotic Diseases was 0·8, as compared with an average of 2·7 in the ten preceding years. The deaths of children under a year old per 1000 births registered were 129·6, as compared with an average of 154·6 in the ten preceding years.

The most note-worthy features of the vitality and mortality statistics are, that the birth rate was remarkably low ; that the death rate was not only very low, but that it was only twice lower since 1871, namely in 1885 and 1886 ; that the deaths of infants were also much below the average of this and other districts ; that no death

was caused by pulmonary consumption or other tubercular disease ; that no death was directly attributed to intemperance or other vice, parturition or accident ; that nearly one-fourth of all who died were at the time of death upwards of sixty-five years old ; and that only one death was uncertified by either Doctor or Coroner.

Six cases of Diphtheria, 4 of Erysipelas, 32 of Scarlet Fever, 3 of Enteric Fever and 2 of Puerperal Fever were certified. Of other contagious or infectious diseases, there came to my knowledge, 10 of Chicken Pox, 5 of Diarrhœa, 4 of Measles and 2 of Influenza. Of these, two died from Scarlet Fever and one from Diarrhœa. None of the cases were treated in Hospital.

The first reported case of Diphtheria was that of a child at Lane Head, convalescing from Scarlet Fever at the time, and all the other cases were near to it. The drainage and general condition of the street near are bad, and cannot be materially improved until New Street and Healey Street have been properly made and channelled. If this be not voluntarily and satisfactorily done by the property owners adjacent thereto, the Council has power to do it, by the provisions of The Private Streets Work Act, 1892.

Many of the cases of Scarlet Fever were contracted in adjacent townships. The type of disease was not severe ; and although the cases were numerous, most of the districts near suffered more severely than Short Heath from that cause. All children from infected homes were advised not to go to school, and parents and guardians were advised how they might best check the spread of the disease, with such means as your Officers had at their command. Thirty-one houses were disinfected after infectious disease, chiefly Scarlet Fever. I did not consider it necessary to advise closure of any school.

With regard to Enteric Fever, one came into the District, to a new property in Poole's Lane, ill from Bloxwich ; one person at Snape's Lodge had a possible chance of infection in Willenhall ; and no probable cause of the other case in the Front Lane was found out. All possible precautions were taken to prevent others being infected,

and I advised your Sanitary Inspector to get the excreta disinfected and removed and buried as soon as practicable.

Special advice was given to Nurses in attendance upon parturient women, suffering from Puerperal Fever.

For practical purposes, it may be said, there was no Infantile Diarrhœa. To this happy result, a cool, comparatively sunless summer, with an aggregate rainfall not much in excess of the average, but with rain falling on many more than the usual number of days, no doubt largely contributed. An open ditch in Healey Street needs the attention of the Council. A ditch at the rear of Mr. Jonas Fletcher's house at New Invention has been done away with. All ditches near to dwellings, sooner or later become a nuisance, and contribute to the production of Diarrhœa.

At the early part of the year a scheme was put forward by the County Council for providing an Isolation Hospital for the treatment of cases of Small Pox, brought from many Districts, and among them, from Short Heath. The site proposed was near the Wren's Nest, Coseley, and in April I advised my Council to join in the scheme. The scheme not being acceptable to all parties, was modified, but still there was not much sign that the County Council could carry their scheme through. In the meantime another scheme embracing several Districts was projected by the Corporation of Wolverhampton, in which I understand you decided to join. This scheme, I am told, is in abeyance for the present, but whether it will ultimately be acted upon remains to be seen. At any rate, it seems to me that if any effectual means of isolation are to be provided for residents in Short Heath, it must be joined for isolation purposes to a larger district, whether a joint scheme by the County Council or some other body or bodies causes the much needed hospital to be built.

A summary of the Inspector of Nuisance's house to house inspection shows 747 occupied houses, with 1727 bedrooms, 456 sanitary conveniences and 333 ashpits, of which 185 are covered and 145 not covered. The proportion of covered to uncovered ashpits shows a

material increase—a step in the right direction. All the newer ashpits are smaller than those formerly built, and no new ashpits are now let in below the ground level. Every ashpit ought to be made water-tight above and below as quickly as possible ; and every ashpit containing water is a nuisance, which the Council has the power to abate. Except 35, all the houses are supplied with tap-water from the Wolverhampton Corporation mains. The system of excrement disposal is by contract, and the sanitary conveniences are chiefly privy cess-pits. The sanitary conveniences are, generally speaking, in fair order and an improvement on last year. The Contractor does the work of removal satisfactorily, and there are no nuisances from accumulation of manure. The pigsties, stables and cowsheds are kept fairly clean. By bye-law 11, pigs may not be kept within 60 feet of a dwelling house. This needs to be more widely known. In several instances, notices for removal of pigsties to the required distance was enforced. There are no offensive trades in the District. The bake-houses, slaughter-houses, dairies, cow-sheds and milk-shops were regularly inspected, and any detected nuisance was ordered to be abated. Much useful work was again done by Informal Notices, in the intervals between the meetings of the Council ; the Sanitary Inspector, nevertheless, proceeding with tact, and clearly recognising that he had no power by virtue of his office, and that power alone is vested in the Council.

In 1899, Brewer's Row was condemned as unfit for habitation. In my last Annual Report, I indicated the Surveyor was satisfied with improvements carried out, except that tap-water had not been supplied, and this he then thought was about to be done. Some hitch, however, seems to have occurred in the negotiations, resulting apparently in a failure to transfer the property to a new owner. Under these circumstances, it seems to me there are two ways of proceeding ; firstly, the Council may re-consider their powers under the Housing of the Working Classes Act ; and secondly, the Corporation may find out for themselves whether the tenants are being

indirectly supplied with their water ; and if so, stop that supply, with the probable result that the houses will, by voluntary action on the part of the tenants, become void. At any rate, these represent 8 out of the 35 houses not supplied with tap water, and the matter has been in hand so long, that I think the Council should bring it to an issue at once.

With regard to the Closing Order made by a Court of Summary Jurisdiction in 1899, which was so strenuously resisted by Mr. Abner Appleby, even to the extent of imprisonment for non-compliance, the property is now closed. Three Informal Notices, in consequence of their condition, to close houses adjoining Mr. A. Appleby's, Chapel Lane and at Share's Acre have been complied with, without further trouble.

Every habitable house in the District is occupied, with the result that there is a tendency to overcrowding ; and it is difficult to prevent it. In my opinion, if 30 to 50 new houses, suitable for the working classes, be built this year, they will be immediately occupied. There is plenty of land, open, airy and suitable to be obtained. Perhaps capitalists will note this, and supply what is needed !

With regard to the question of sewage disposal, I am informed that plans are being prepared for the sewerage of New Invention, presumably with the intention of sewerage the District in sections. Before any work is undertaken, I wish, however, to emphasize my remarks last year ; that before one section is begun, the scheme for the *completion* of the whole work should be created in detail and definitely agreed on and adopted.

The Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, imposes certain duties upon the Council and its Officers. So far as Short Heath is concerned, most of these duties had been done for many years past, under other Acts. During the year I inspected the whole of the factories and workshops in the District—61 in number. Having regard to the nature of the trades carried on therein, on the whole I consider them clean, sufficiently ventilated and drained, and quite free from

overcrowding. The shops built in recent years are light and airy, and a great improvement on the older shops. Several nuisances in or near them, arising from the keeping of pigeons, fowl and pigs were detected. These I asked the Sanitary Inspector to get removed by Formal Notice, and removal was effected, except in one case near the First and Last Inn ; and in that case, I understand the Notice is about to be complied with. A drain *within* a Bakehouse at Lane Head, contrary to law, was found. Formal Notice to have it trapped with Doulton's trap *outside* the bakehouse is, I am told, being complied with. Neglect to fill in Form 46, relating to cubic space is general ; and I suggested that perhaps the Council might assist the occupiers in fulfilling the duty imposed on them in that respect. On this point I gave personal instructions at six of the largest workshops and factories, calculated to avoid overcrowding. In one varnish house I suggested the desirability of improved ventilation, and in 39 instances asked that the shops might be limewashed again by definite dates. In 38 of these instances, your Inspector reports that the shops have since been limewashed, and that the other shop is about to be done. Nearly every shop in the district has been limewashed once at least in 14 months for many years past. I also suggested more and improved sanitary conveniences near some shops, but do not at present consider there is need for Formal Notice. There are no *wet* trades, and no wet floors. It would greatly improve many of the shops, by making it more possible to keep them free from dust, if the floors were made of brick or wood, instead of earth. There is, however, a good deal of prejudice against change, which can best be overcome by a slow process of education. There is, so far as I know, no home work in dwellings ; there are no dangerous or offensive trades ; there are no lead industries ; there are no underground bakehouses ; and a register of workshops is and has long been kept. I am not aware whether any list of outworkers has been prepared by the Council ; but for their information I may say, that by an Order made July 14, 1902, it was ordered by the Home Secretary that sections 107 and 108 of the Act of

1901 should include the making of locks, latches and keys. This Order, I take it, imposes duties upon the Council, but not on me. There are also duties relating to the prevention of Fire. This section of the Act, I am advised, should be administered by your Surveyor and not by me.

The water supply, chiefly from an artesian well, but supplemented by river water, was good and plentiful at all parts of the District.

There were 162 births registered, and 21 deaths of children under a year old. Ninety-six children were successfully vaccinated, seven were exempted from vaccination by Magisterial certificate, and no certificate of insusceptibility was presented. I strongly urge the Council, in view of a general tendency for Small Pox to spread through the Country, to do all in their power to encourage vaccination of the young, and re-vaccination a few years later.

The roads of Short Heath, being the main highways for the conveyance of coal from Essington to Bilston, Darlaston and Willenhall for manufacturing purposes, are subjected to an amount of wear and tear, out of all proportion to the needs of Short Heath itself. The heavy cost for repairs of roads still hinders sanitary progress, by absorbing money which, if available, might be used in other ways. This, in my judgment, should induce the County Council to make most of the roads "main roads."

I am informed the Council has adopted the Private Street Works Act, 1892, but not the Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890—which I have several times advised.

Gas mains have been laid through much of the district, and are about to be extended from the Prince Consort Inn, through New Invention. This ought to lead to the putting in of more gas engines and the development of the lock and key industries, if the Manufacturers will only be sharp enough to take note of the signs of the times and place themselves on an equality for production with their neighbours. It ought also to lead to many social advantages, if the Council can see their way to the provision of public lighting of the streets.

The Tables required by the Local Government Board and County Council are in substance appended.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

JOHN T. HARTILL,

M. O. H.

Willenhall,

January 24th, 1903.

Table 1.

FOR WHOLE DISTRICT.

Year.	Population estimated to middle of each year.		Births.		Total Deaths Registered in the District.			Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District.		Deaths of Non-residents registered in Public Institutions in the District.		Deaths of Residents registered in Public Institutions beyond the District.		Net Deaths at all Ages belonging to the District.	
	1	2	Rate*		Under 1 Year of Age		At all Ages:		9	10	11	12	13	Number.	Rate.*
					Number.	Rate per 1000 Births registered	Number.	Rate.*							
1892		2551	92	36.0	21	228.2	59	23.1							
1893		2600	109	41.9	16	146.7	47	18.0							
1894		2667	119	44.6	17	142.8	43	16.1							
1895		2748	130	47.3	8	61.5	32	11.6			5	37	13.4		
1896		3373	136	40.3	14	102.9	46	13.6			0	46	13.6		
1897		3472	153	44.0	33	215.6	79	22.7							
1898		3531	156	44.1	29	185.8	54	15.2			0	54	15.2		
1899		3531	135	38.2	28	207.4	55	15.5			0	55	15.5		
1900		3531	130	36.8	15	115.3	72	20.3			0	72	20.3		
1901		3531	135	38.2	19	140.7	47	13.3			1	48	13.5		
Averages for years 1892-1901		3153	129	40.9	20	154.6	53	16.9	0	0					
1902		3585	162	45.1	21	129.6	44	12.2	0	0	2	46	12.8		

* Rates in Columns 4, 8, and 13 calculated per 1000 of estimated population.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water.)

550 in 1891.

1063 since 1896.

Total population at all ages

Number of inhabited houses

Average number of persons per house

3531

722

4.8

At Census of 1901.

NOTE.—Columns 9, 10, and 11.—There are no Public Institutions in the District. Previous to 1895 Short Heath and Willenhall together formed the Township of Willenhall and were governed by two Local Boards. Deaths in the Union House at Wolverhampton of persons from Short Heath were not obtainable separately, but the average would be from one to two each year. I have no information of any deaths except those in the District and those as given in the Union House.

The Township of Short Heath now embraces the old Local Board District of Short Heath, plus part of Wednesfield old Local Board District.

By the term “Non-residents” is meant persons brought into the District on account of sickness or infirmity, and dying in public institutions there; and by the term “Residents” is meant persons who have been taken out of the District on account of sickness or infirmity, and have died in public institutions elsewhere.

Table 2.

LOCALITIES.

Not filled up, as there were no recognised divisions of known
population.

Table 3.
Cases of Infectious Disease Certified during the Year.

	At all Ages	At Ages—Years.					
		Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and upw'ds
Diphtheria	6		2	1	2	1	
Erysipelas	4			1		3	
Scarlet Fever	32	2	10	17	2	1	
Enteric Fever	3			1	1	1	
Puerperal Fever	2					2	
Totals	47	2	12	20	5	8	

NOTE.—No case was removed to Hospital for treatment, and no Hospital has been provided.

Other Cases of Infectious Disease which came to my knowledge.

	At all Ages	At Ages—Years.					
		Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and upw'ds
Chicken Pox	10	1	5	4			
Diarrhœa	5		1			3	1
Measles	4			1		3	
Influenza	2					2	
Totals	21	1	6	5	0	8	1

Table 4.

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH.

Causes of Death.	Deaths in or belonging to whole District at subjoined Ages.							Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District.
	All Ages	Under 1 year	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and up-wards	
Small-pox								
Measles								
Scarlet Fever	2		1	1				
Whooping-cough								
Diphtheria and membranous croup								
Croup	1			1				
Fever { Typhus								
Enteric								
Other continued								
Epidemic Influenza								
Cholera								
Plague								
Diarrhœa	1		1					
Enteritis	5	3	1			1		
Puerperal Fever... ..								
Erysipelas								
Other Septic Diseases								
Phthisis								
Other Tubercular Diseases								
Cancer, malignant disease	1						1	
Bronchitis	7	3	1			1	2	
Pneumonia	1	1						
Pleurisy	1					1		
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs	1	1						
Alcoholism								
Cirrhosis of Liver								
Veneral Diseases								
Premature Birth	1	1						
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition								
Heart Diseases	1						1	
Accidents... ..								
Suicides								
All other causes	24	12	1	1		3	7	
All causes	46	21	5	3	0	6	11	0

Table 5.**SUMMARY OF WORK BY INSPECTOR OF NUISANCES.**

Houses inspected	...	...	...	...	...	...	747
Schools	„	...	...	...	...	...	3
Dairies	„	quarterly	...	...	...	...	3
Cowsheds	„	„	...	...	...	...	2
Bakehouses	„	„	...	...	...	...	2
Slaughter-houses inspected quarterly				...	...	...	3
Ashpits and Privies inspected			...	...	...	...	789
Pigsties inspected	...	...	...	...	...	...	92
Informal Notices to remedy Foul Condition of Dwelling Houses							8
Abatements after Notice			...	...	...	...	8
Formal Notices to remedy structural defects in Dwelling Houses							7
Abatements after Notice			...	...	...	...	7
Informal Notices to remedy structural defects in Dwelling							
Houses	...	...	...	...	...	...	25
Abatements after Notice			...	...	...	...	25
Formal Notices to abate overcrowding				...	...	...	11
Abatements after Notice			...	...	...	...	8
Informal Notices to abate overcrowding			..	...	...	...	12
Abatements after Notice			...	...	...	...	12
Informal Notices concerning Houses unfit for Habitation			...				3
Houses closed after Notice			...	...	...	...	3
Formal Notice to abate Nuisance from Bakehouse Drainage							1
Abatement after Notice			...	...	...	...	0
Informal Notice to abate Nuisance from Slaughter-house							
drainage	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Abatement after Notice			...	...	...	...	1
Formal Notices to abate nuisances from Ashpits and Privies							13
Abatements after Notice			...	...	...	...	13

(Continued on Next Page.)

TABLE 5 (continued).

Informal Notices to abate nuisances from Ashpits and Privies	40
Abatements after Notice 	38
Formal Notices to remedy faults in House Drainage ...	7
Abatements after Notice 	6
Informal Notices to remedy faults in House Drainage ..	48
Abatements after Notice 	45
Informal Notices to abolish trap-less insanitary cess-pools	2
Abolished after notice 	2
Formal Notices to abate nuisances from Pigsties ...	2
Abatements after Notice 	2
Informal Notices to abate nuisances from Pigsties ...	8
Abatements after Notice 	8
Formal Notices to remedy structural defects in Workshops	2
Abatements after Notice 	2
Formal Notice to remove pigeons and fowl from Workshop	1
Abatement after Notice 	1
Informal Notices to limewash and cleanse Workshops ...	39
Notices complied with 	38
Informal Notices to abate other Nuisaances 	18
Abatements after Notice 	10
Formal Notice in 1899—complied with in 1902 	1
Formal Notices in 1900, 1901 and 1902 concerning defective	
Water Supply—not complied with 	8
Informal Notices in 1901—complied with in 1902 ...	3
Houses disinfected after Infectious Disease 	31